

the holder of, and authorized to be undertaken under, a license or permit or equivalent authorization issued by a reciprocating state for the commercial recovery of hard mineral resources. For purposes of this section, interference includes physical interference with activities authorized by the Act, this part, and a license or permit issued pursuant thereto; the filing of a specious claim in the United States or any other nation; and any other activity designed to harass, or which has the effect of harassing, persons conducting deep seabed mining activities authorized by law. Interference does not include the exercise of any superior rights granted to United States citizens by the Constitution of the United States, or any Federal or State law, treaty, or agreement or regulation promulgated pursuant thereto.

(4) United States citizens shall exercise their rights on the high seas with reasonable regard for the interests of other states in their exercise of the freedoms of the high seas.

(b) *Restrictions on issuance of permits.* The Administrator will not issue any permit—

(1) After the date on which any relevant international agreement is ratified by and enters into force with respect to the United States, except to the extent that issuance of the permit is not inconsistent with that agreement.

(2) The recovery plan of which, submitted pursuant to the Act and implementing regulations, would apply to an area to which applies, or would conflict with:

(i) Any exploration plan or recovery plan submitted with any pending application to which priority of right for issuance applies under 15 CFR part 970 or this part;

(ii) Any exploration plan or recovery plan associated with any existing license or permit; or

(iii) An equivalent authorization which has been issued, or for which formal notice of application has been submitted, by a reciprocating state prior to the filing date of any relevant application for licenses or permits pursuant to the Act and implementing regulations;

(3) Authorizing commercial recovery within any area of the deep seabed in which exploration is authorized under a valid existing license if such permit is issued to a person other than the licensee for such area;

(4) Which authorizes commercial recovery to commence before January 1, 1988;

(5) The recovery plan for which applies to any area of the deep seabed if, within the 3-year period before the date of application for that permit:

(i) The applicant therefor surrendered or relinquished such area under an exploration plan or recovery plan associated with a previous license or permit issued to such applicant; or

(ii) A permit previously issued to the applicant had an exploration plan or recovery plan which applied to such area and such license or permit was revoked under section 106 of the Act;

(6) Or approve the transfer of a permit, except to a United States citizen; or

(7) That would authorize commercial recovery activities in an area other than for which the applicant therefore holds a valid exploration license under part 970 of this title.

§ 971.104 OMB control number.

The information collection requirements and reporting and recordkeeping requirements contained in this part were approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0648-0170.

Subpart B—Applications

§ 971.200 General.

(a) *Who may apply; how.* Any United States citizen holding a valid exploration license may apply to the Administrator for issuance of a commercial recovery permit for all or part of the area to which the license applies. Any holder of a commercial recovery permit may apply to the Administrator for transfer of the permit. Applications must be submitted in the form and manner described in this subpart.

(b) *Place, form and copies.* An application for the issuance or transfer of a commercial recovery permit must be in writing, verified and signed by an authorized officer or other authorized

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representative of the applicant. The application and 25 copies thereof must be submitted to:

Ocean Minerals and Energy Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Suite 710, 1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20235.

The Administrator may waive in whole or in part, at his discretion, the requirement that 25 copies of an application be filed with NOAA.

(c) *General contents.* The application must contain a proposed commercial recovery plan and the financial, technical, environmental and other information specified in this part, which in total are necessary for the Administrator to make the determinations required by the Act and this part. Although the ultimate standards for determinations under these rules are identical for both transferees and original preexisting licensees, NOAA anticipates that applicants who are transferees will have to supply more information with the application than licensees will [see subsection (e) in this section].

(d) *Identification of requirements.* Each portion of the application should identify the requirements of this part to which it responds.

(e) *Information previously submitted in connection with an exploration license.* Information previously submitted as part of an exploration license application, as well as information submitted during the course of license activities (such as data included in annual reports to NOAA), may be incorporated in the commercial recovery permit application by reference.

(f) *Request for confidential treatment of information.* If an applicant wishes to have any information in its application not be subject to public disclosure, it must so request, at the time of submitting the information, pursuant to § 971.802 which will govern disposition of the request.

(g) *Pre-application consultation.* The Administrator will make NOAA staff available to potential applicants for pre-application consultations on how to respond to the provisions of this part. In appropriate circumstances, the Administrator will provide written confirmation to the applicant of oral

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guidance resulting from such consultations. Such consultation is required for the purpose of § 971.207. The applicant is encouraged to consult with affected States as early as is practicable [see also §§ 971.213 and 971.606(b)].

(h) *Compliance with Federal consistency requirements.* An applicant for a commercial recovery permit must comply with all necessary requirements, including procedures, pursuant to 15 CFR part 930, subpart D. Applications and other necessary data and information must be transmitted to the designated State agency as prescribed under 15 CFR 930.50.

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§ 971.201 Statement of financial resources.

(a) *General.* The application must contain information sufficient to demonstrate to the Administrator pursuant to § 971.301 that, upon issuance or transfer of the permit, the applicant will have access to the financial resources to carry out, in accordance with this part, the commercial recovery program set forth in the applicant's commercial recovery plan.

(b) *Specific.* In particular, the information on financial resources is expected to be general in nature but must include the likely sources and timing of funds to meet the applicant's scheduled expenditures in the recovery plan. These sources may include cash flow, reserves, and outside funding.

§ 971.202 Statement of technological experience and capabilities.

(a) *General.* The application must contain information sufficient to demonstrate to the Administrator pursuant to § 971.301 that, upon issuance or transfer of the permit, the applicant will have the technological capability to carry out, in accordance with the regulations contained in this part, the commercial recovery program set out in the applicant's commercial recovery plan.

(b) *Specific.* In particular, the information submitted pursuant to this section must describe the equipment, knowledge, and skills the applicant